

Today's News - Tuesday, December 9, 2008

- Kamin looks at how Obama's plans can "raise infrastructure - and the American landscape - to a new level": will they live up to "the standards set in the 1930s and set new ones?"
- Zandberg's interesting Q&A with Brit Bishop re: intelligent design: London is not "a model for any Israeli city," but "cities can learn from each other" by taking "ideas, not solutions."
- A look at 30-year history of Beijing architecture "opening up" to the outer world.
- Jones questions critics who say Gaudi's Sagrada Familia is being "banalized in the name of tourism" (actually, he loves "the emerging result, kitsch and all").
- Campbell on a historic factory under pressure from the present.
- Baillieu on the U.K.'s shortsightedness in shelving heritage protection bill.
- Modernist cottages on Cape Cod saved from the wrecking ball (now all that's needed is the \$\$\$ for preservation).
- A Hawaiian Island development plans put on hold - to cheers of many.
- Saffron doesn't mind tall tower plan for Philadelphia - in the right place (and as long as it's not "a fat, hulking copycat").
- Shortlist for Stonehenge visitors center just got longer.
- King finds "homegrown architectural innovation" as "architects run wild with Presidio museum ideas."
- SMC regroups as Archial, and the company's crown renamed Alsop.
- Whitechapel gallery renovates and expands with hopes of revitalizing a London neighborhood.
- MVRDV's winning design for a new town near Seoul: a "series of overgrown hill-shaped buildings" (we kid you not).
- FAT's community building on the outskirts of Rotterdam "distills the essence of suburban dreams."
- A look at Gehry's new offices.
- Blum is bemused by architects now consulting with their former adversaries (a.k.a. "marauding skaters") for "a lesson in flow."
- Gragg has a long conversation about Portland's "fork in the road" in choosing a bridge design: artful or out-of-the-box, the "choice will have huge consequences."
- Saffron is now hopeful that Philly's South Street Bridge has a shot of being better than originally planned.
- Jacobs offers an eyeful of must-see green American landmarks.
- It's an international line-up for IIA convention in Bangalore.

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How Obama can raise infrastructure -- and the American landscape -- to a new level: By making good design part of the program for economic recovery...will they live up to the standards set in the 1930s and set new ones, simultaneously improving American competitiveness and enriching the public realm for generations to come? By Blair Kamin- Chicago Tribune

Intelligent design: Q&A with Peter Bishop, British urban planner and the director of the Design for London studio...It is a mistake to think that a city like London can be a model for any Israeli city...However, cities can learn from each other. What is important is that we take ideas, not solutions, and transpose them intelligently. By Esther Zandberg- Ha'aretz (Israel)

Changing architecture of Beijing: The Fragrant Hill Hotel, designed by I.M. Pei (1979)...was the first piece of work by overseas architects after China adopted the reform and opening-up policy...Since then, Beijing's architectural design market has been open to the outer world. -- Beckett International; Kumagai Gumi; Robert Sobel/Emery Roth & Sons; Paul Andreu; Koolhaas; Rocco S.K.Yim; Herzog & de Meuron; Li Xinggang [images]- China.org

Is the Sagrada Familia being banalised in the name of tourism? A group of Spanish architects and art world types has savagely denounced the continuing work to complete Gaudi's religious masterpiece...I love the emerging result, kitsch and all. By Jonathan Jones - Guardian (UK)

Industrial strength: Historic factory under pressure from the present...North Easton is one of the best preserved memories of America in its great industrial heyday...The problem is a law known as 40B...if at least 25% of the units in a new housing development are "affordable," the developer is allowed to ignore local zoning rules and even landmark designations. By Robert Campbell- Boston Globe

Going nowhere on heritage: The government has shelved heritage protection for short-term gain, but the long-term costs will be substantial...Allowing the bill to proceed would have sent out a strong signal that heritage is a priority, when patently it isn't. By Amanda Baillieu- BD/Building Design (UK)

That old Cape Mod: Once slated for demolition, Modernist cottages in National Seashore in line for preservation -- DOCOMOMO/US; Peter McMahon; Jack Phillips; Marcel Breuer; Jack Hall; Serge Chermayeff; Paul Weidlinger; Nathaniel Saltonstall; Oliver Morton; Charles Zehnder- Boston Globe

In an Age-Old Quest for Balance, an Uncertain Shift: A battle over development on Molokai, in the Hawaiian Islands, ended abruptly when the owners of Molokai Ranch, which covers a third of the island, shut down operations and construction plans. - New York Times

Arch Street's a bad place for ultra-tall and dense tower: ...1,500-foot...American Commerce Center...Yes, they should build it. But let's hope city officials make them build it better...partisans [are] so entranced by the record-breaking stature of the proposed skyscraper that they seem not to have noticed that the object of their affection is a fat, hulking copycat. By Inga Saffron -- KPF/Kohn Pedersen Fox [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

A second bite at Stonehenge centre: Two architects who have drawn up unrealised designs for a visitor centre are on a new shortlist for a slimmed down version of the scheme -- Edward Cullinan; Denton Corker Marshall; White Design; Make; Bennetts Associates - BD/Building Design (UK)

Architects run wild with Presidio museum ideas: "CAMP: Reconsidered" shows that there are ways to grow without taking the role approach of mimicking the past at a larger scale. It's also a reminder that opportunities exist in today's Bay Area for homegrown architectural innovation - if only we have the will to take a chance. By John King -- Mark Horton; Fougner Architecture; Conger Moss Guillard; Faulders Studio; Kuth/Ranieri [images, link]- San Francisco Chronicle

The SMC Group is to change its name to Archial Group as part of a restructuring programme across its offices...SMC Alsop, seen as the jewel in the company's crown, will remain with the group, renamed Alsop. - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Modern Art Showcase Expands, Hoping to Revitalize a London Area: The Whitechapel's Arts and Crafts building and its next-door neighbor, a quirky 1892 structure, are being joined as part of a \$20 million renovation and expansion. -- Robbrecht & Daem; Witherford Watson Mann Architects [images]- New York Times

MVRDV wins design competition for a new town near Seoul in South Korea: ...series of overgrown hill-shaped buildings would make up one of two centres for the new settlement, Gwanggyo...expected to eventually house 77,000 people. [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Heerlijkheid Hoogvliet, Rotterdam, Netherlands by FAT: ...community building on the outskirts of Rotterdam distills the essence of suburban dreams -- Crimson Architectural Historians- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Unveiled: Gehry Partners' New Offices: Firm shares models of future El Segundo studios [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

New Oslo Opera House Is Really a Stealth Skate Park: For years, architects have gone to great lengths to protect their buildings from marauding skaters. But as aesthetic trends move toward folded planes...designers have been looking to their former adversaries for a lesson in flow. By Andrew Blum -- Foreign Office Architects (FOA); zaha Hadid; Snøhetta [images], [links]- Wired magazine

Willamette Crossing's fork in the road: It's a cable stay vs. a "wave" bridge design. The choice will have huge consequences. By Randy Gragg -- Bradley Touchstone/Touchstone Architecture; Miguel Rosales/Rosales + Partners [images]- Portland Spaces (Oregon)

Last Dash Across the South Street Bridge: The changes aren't perfect, but the people who took part in the charette consider them a big victory...It shows you that mayoral leadership is just as important as federal dollars in determining the quality of Philadelphia's public spaces. By Inga Saffron -- Gary Hack; James Campbell/Campbell Thomas; Wallace Roberts & Todd- Philadelphia Inquirer

Must-See Green American Landmarks: A skyscraper, city park, baseball stadium, hotel, museum, parking garage, restaurant, and more—all of them iconic, all of them green. This is what sustainable design looks like now. By Karrie Jacobs -- Renzo Piano; Rana Creek Living Architecture; HOK Sport; Studio 804; Diller Scofidio + Renfro/Field Operations/Piet Oudolf; Moore Ruble Yudell; Oppenheim; Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill; Lake/Flato [slide show]- Travel + Leisure

Global stars to grace architects meet in Bangalore from Dec 10: ...galaxy of international architects to grace the three-day national convention...the future and role of architects in imagining India. -- Indian Institute of Architects (IIA); Will Alsop; Cengish Bektash; Dickson Deshpommi; Ma Yansong; K. Jaisim; V. Naresh Narasimhan; T.M. Thomas; Bijoy Ramachandran/Hundredhands; etc.- India Today

Toyo Ito & Associates: Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archive (BAM/PFA), Berkeley, California

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